Lessons Learned: Socioeconomic Impact Analysis of the Tar Creek Environmental Assessment

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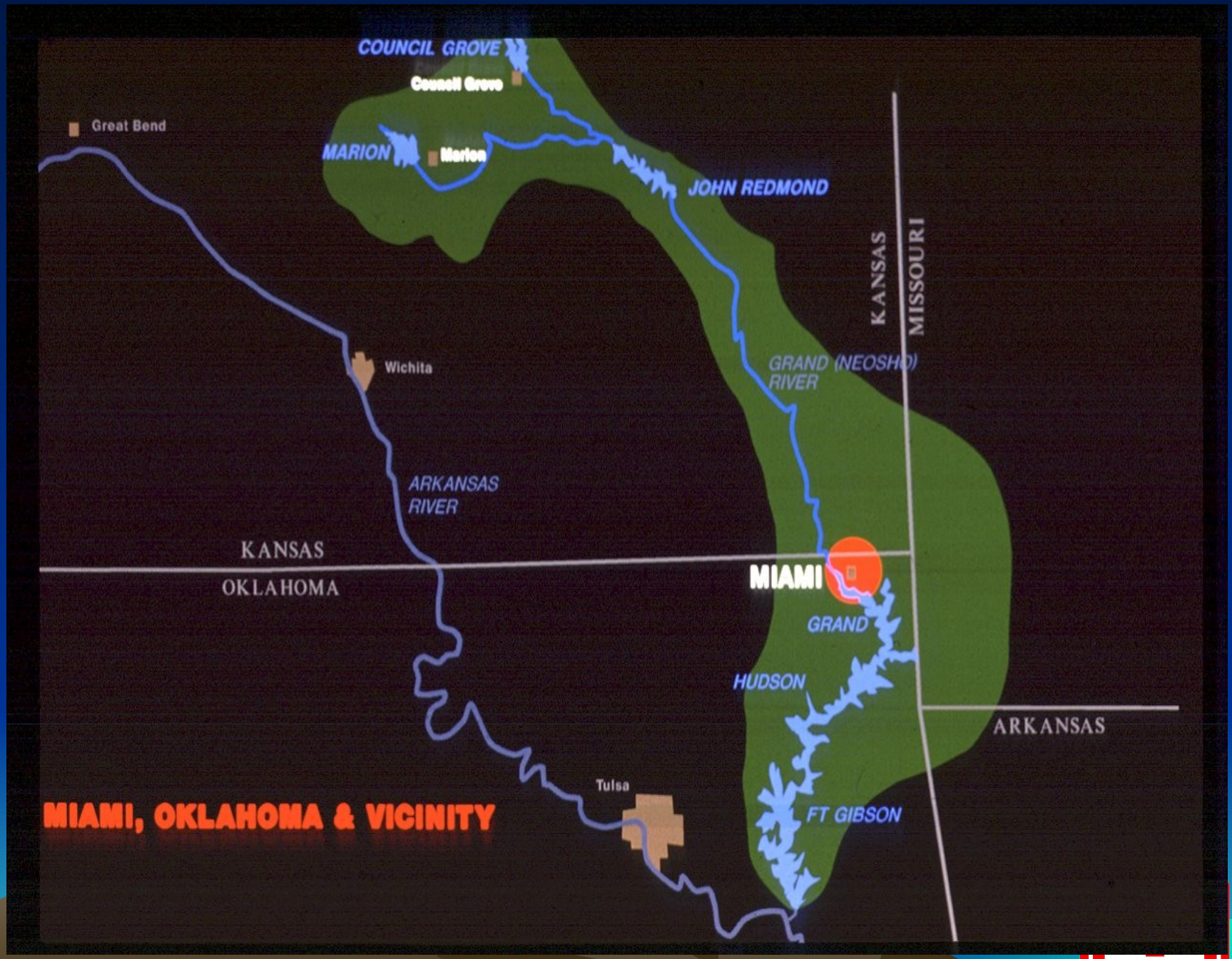
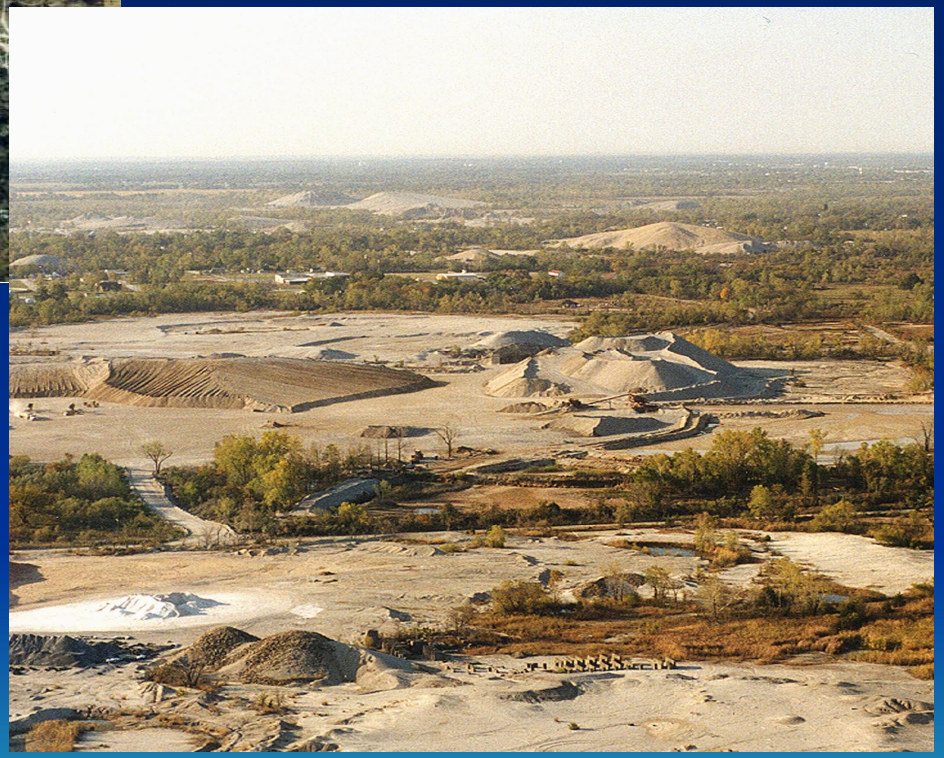
History of Tar Creek

- Northeast Oklahoma
- NPL– 1983
- Lead and Zinc mining
- Millions of tons of chat
- Elevated blood-lead levels
- Flooding
- Initial remediation and voluntary buy-outs


COUNCIL GROVE
Council Grove
Great Bend
MARION
Marion
JOHN REDMOND
KANSAS
MISSOURI
Wichita
GRAND (NEOSHO) RIVER
ARKANSAS RIVER
KANSAS
OKLAHOMA
MIAMI
GRAND
HUDSON
ARKANSAS
Tulsa
FT GIBSON
MIAMI, OKLAHOMA & VICINITY

Left: Ariel photography of Tar Creek region



Right: Photo of chat piles near Picher-Cardin, Oklahoma

Just how big are the chat piles?

Current Activity and Funding

- Section 111 of Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2004
- WRDA 2007
- Alternatives
  - No Action
  - Relocation

Constraints

- Time
  - Strict deadline of mid-December 2007 for draft
  - Final in early January 2008
- Data
  - No time or funding to gather/survey for additional data
  - Existing information with professional judgment had to be used

Social and Economic Considerations

- What are the biophysical impacts?
- What are the linkages between biophysical and social/economic conditions?
- What are the with-out project conditions?
  - Existing and Future
- What are the impact at the individual level?
- What are the impacts at the social/community level?
- What are the environmental justice issues?

Socio-economic Analysis: Assumptions

- No Action
  - No Federal funding, but…
  - Everyone leaves eventually
  - Quality of life and community deteriorates over time
- Relocation
  - Improve quality of life
  - Move far enough away and stay away
  - Everyone will take buy-out
  - Buy-out speeds up process

Significance

- Social and Economic Impacts
  - Human Environment
    - Direct, Indirect, Cumulative
- Social and Economic effects are not the driver of “Significance”…. But….
- Context and Intensity
  - Nation/Region affected interests/locality
  - 1508.27 10 factors identified related to intensity
    - “quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial”
    - Cumulatively Significant

Key Conditions

- Population
  - Children
    - (EO 13045)
  - Elderly
  - Low Income/Native American Population
    - (EO 12898)
- Long term Issues with Contamination
- Institutional Issues
  - Kin and informal social networks
  - Churches
  - Schools/Child Care
  - Participation in Tribal Affairs
  - Health Care
- Traditional Lands

EA or EIS

- Are the Social and Economic Impacts linked to biophysical changes?
- What were the changes under the without project condition relative to the with project condition?

Lessons Learned

(Key Takeaway Points)

- Benefit of short-track process
- Do a programmatic EA/EIS from the start!

Questions?